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(a copy to
JF, GW)

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May 29, 1952

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: S/P
Meeting on the Middle East Command
Organization -- May 28, 1952

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEWED BY VWOLF JR DATE 6/1/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

PARTICIPANTS:

NE - Mr. Kopper
NEA - Mr. Daspit

British Embassy:
Mr. Greenhill
Mr. Marten

COPIES TO:

S/S (2), IAD, EUR(2), S/P (2), G, S/A, NE
Defense, Captain Patrick (4)

Officers of the British Embassy called to inform the Department of London's reactions to the Department's comments of May 29 concerning procedures for establishing the Middle East Command Organization. They reported that London had been actively engaged in preparing a paper on the MECO designed to serve as a basis for diplomatic discussion, and that this paper now awaits ministerial approval. The Foreign Office had discussed a draft of the paper with Minister Holmes of our Embassy in London and had made several changes as the result of his observations. London was reported as being satisfied that the paper was in line with US thinking.

The paper was described as dealing integrally with the problem of how best to approach the Arab States, considering the pros and cons of a conference

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(5) The Department has heretofore hoped that this problem might be solved by holding the proposed seven-power conference on MEO and keeping any agreements arrived at tentative, pending approaches to the Arab States. It may be that this course is not feasible, however, and that the necessary preliminary coordination of the views of the seven-powers can be best effected through diplomatic channels. Regardless of the means used, after this coordination has been effected, it is the Department's view that all the Arab States should be approached about the same time on approximately the same basis, with a view to obtaining their reactions to proposals of the general type considered acceptable by the seven powers. On the basis of their reactions, it could then be determined how best to proceed with working out the definitive form of the organization (i.e., by conference or by diplomatic exchange.)

(6) When the Arab States are approached, the Department believes that it will be desirable to inform Israel of developments and reassure the government that Israel's security and interests will be safeguarded. Israel's association with the General will require special arrangements, and any negotiations with Israel should of course be conducted separately.

(7) The Department would be glad at an early date to discuss informally and in great confidence with the British Embassy current British thinking on the form and character of MEO since such informal talks might give a clue to the feasibility of inaugurating a wider exchange of ideas among the sponsors through diplomatic channels.

NEA: DaspiE
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MEMORANDUM

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(1) The Department welcomes the latest British initiative in continuing the exchange of views on the Middle East Command Organization. The Department is in full agreement that it would not be desirable to proceed with the proposed preliminary meeting on MEO until the nature of negotiations between the United Kingdom and Egypt is clearer. The Department also agrees that any provisions for the establishment of the MEO must be adapted to circumstances of developments in these negotiations.

(2) The Department is increasingly convinced that to solicit effective Arab support for MEO, care must be taken to consult the Arab States while the organization is still in the planning stage. In the method of such consultation, the Department

[REDACTED]

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to recognize that there are essential elements on which the sponsors cannot compromise even for Arab cooperation. This coordination must be effected, however, in such a manner as to avoid creating the impression that the great powers are combining against the Arab States or that they intend to present the Arab States with arrangements which they have already cast in final form.

(3) The Department

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UK proposed to give the Department a preview of the paper before its distribution to the other sponsoring powers. [REDACTED]

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The officers of the British Embassy were told that the Department attached considerable importance to a bilateral exchange of views with the UK prior to any general round of diplomatic exchanges involving all the sponsoring powers. There was no escaping the fact that the success of the MECO would depend primarily on the support and backing of the UK and the US. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The proposed bilateral discussions, it was pointed out, could be conducted informally at the working level, and need not produce a joint draft in which every word had been weighed and agreed. What was intended was to assure substantial agreement on the essential elements of the MECO. [REDACTED]

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Mr. Greenhill and Mr. Marten stated that they would report the Department's views to London and would inform the Department when further advice was received. In response to questions, they indicated that the British MECO paper would probably receive final clearance within the next two weeks.

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